

cannot compete with our foreign competitors due to export control limitations, not because of national security interests but because of the slow review process in Congress. We are trying to change that. That is what I am talking about.

In June of 1999 and January of this year, with the urging of the minority leader, Senator DASCHLE, myself, and others, the administration agreed to ease the level of controls which are referred to as MTOPS—million theoretical operations per second. MTOPS. We, as well as those in the computer industry, were elated by the news.

However, as it stands now, there is a 6-month congressional review period for raising the level of MTOPS. The Banking Committee bill reduces the time from 180 days to 60 days. This is a step in the right direction. But I, along with Senator BENNETT of Utah, Senator DASCHLE, Senator KERRY of Massachusetts, Senator MURRAY, Senator BINGAMAN, Senator KENNEDY, and Senator BOXER, believe a further reduction is necessary; that is, to 30 days. There is an amendment pending, if this bill ever comes back up, to change it to 30 days. I am confident it will be adopted overwhelmingly.

The reality of the situation is, by limiting American companies to this degree, we are not only losing short-term market share but we are allowing foreign companies to make more money and, in turn, create better products in the future, to which we will never catch up. This could lead to the eventual loss of our Nation's lead, and it is an absolute lead in computer technology, which has propelled the United States to the good economic standing we are experiencing today. The issue of updating our export controls is critical to our Nation's economy and the success of our high-tech industry.

I urge the majority to move this bill forward, to allow the amendment process, and let's get on with it. The cold war is over. People must understand the cold war is over. If American companies can make more money overseas, they will simply invest more money into research and development there, and that is wrong.

I extend my appreciation to my friend from Colorado for allowing me to proceed.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 11 a.m. with time to be equally divided between the Senator from Idaho,

Mr. CRAIG, or his designee, and the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Idaho, Mr. CRAIG, shall be in control of the first half of time.

The Senator from Colorado.

THE OIL CRISIS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I would like to proceed in morning business for about 10 minutes. I would like to add my comments to those of my colleagues who spoke yesterday who were concerned about the rising cost of fuel. Many of my friends and colleagues have spoken to the issue of our rising dependency on foreign oil. This morning, I would like to take a little different perspective and talk a little bit about how the crisis affects the backbone of American commerce, which is the backbone of the American trucking industry.

Over 95 percent of all commercial manufactured goods and agricultural products are shipped by truck at some point. Mr. President, 9.6 million people have jobs directly or indirectly related to trucking. In addition, trucking contributes over 5 percent of America's gross domestic product which is the equivalent of \$272 billion in the economy every single year. Over 6.7 billion tons of goods are shipped in this Nation every year. Those are staggering numbers. I use them to emphasize the impact that trucks have in America.

I know the trucking life myself. I started driving when I was 21, when I got out of the service. I put myself through college by driving an 18-wheeler. Last year, I decided to renew my commercial driver's license in the State of Colorado and I attended a truck-driving school to do that. I have a small tractor trailer so I know firsthand the impact of the increase of fuel. Paying the bill for 200 gallons of fuel in a truck is not like filling up the family car, and these long-line trucks, by the way, fill up every day.

Last week, while the Senate was in recess, I spent the week making deliveries in a truck along Colorado's Front Range. I did it so I could see and hear firsthand what truckers, as well as shippers and other related businesses, are going through. At diners, gas stations, and delivery points, they told me from their perspective it is much worse than anyone in Washington may imagine.

While I was driving, I met a man named Wesley White from Oregon who said he was on his last run. He couldn't afford to continue fueling his truck. He had been a policeman for over 20 years and at the end of his police service he retired, took his pension, and bought a truck with the intent of going into business for himself. But, this time around when he gets home he is going to park the truck for good. Without the

income from delivering goods, he is not going to be able to make his truck payments. He will lose the business of the truck and he will also lose his pension which he used to buy the truck.

Wesley is not alone. Three times in the last 2 months, hundreds of truckers from all over the United States have come to Washington to ask for help. I attended the first rally in February, and I went to another one yesterday. One thing I did learn, when these people come to Washington, they are not here to complain about profit margins or stock prices. They are here because their very livelihood is on the line.

I have to tell you, Mr. President, I never met a trucker who wanted a handout. They want a job, a fair shake, and fairness from Congress. One trucker I met at the last rally I went to had a wife and two small children. The four of them were actually living in the sleeper of the truck because the increased price of diesel fuel did not leave them enough money at the end of the month to even pay house rent.

Unfortunately, this administration has ignored the plight of these hard-working Americans. The administration has got us into this mess by the total lack of any energy policy. They stand in the way of domestic oil production, they refuse to release Federal fuel stockpiles to drive the cost of fuel down, and they continually lock up public lands so we cannot explore for new resources. Now faced with skyrocketing diesel prices, they still do nothing of substance, instead they are hoping the OPEC oil ministers will reverse their strategy to limit production and increase fuel prices.

We fought the gulf war, as you and I know, and this is how we get repaid. In fact, in a rather strange twist of fate we are now also dependent on Iraqi oil.

Instead of increasing our own resources, the Secretary recently went to the Middle East, hat in hand, to beg for fuel. Now administration officials are coming before Congress to propose we study alternative energy resources. I have news for them. Trucks don't run on solar and they don't run on wind; they run on diesel. Everything we buy, eat or wear is delivered on a truck. If they stop rolling, very simply this Nation also comes to a stop.

Even if OPEC increases production, the effect on the American consumers will be months away, we need immediate relief. In that context, I recently introduced S. 2161 entitled "The American Transportation Recovery and Highway Trust Fund Protection Act of 2000." This bill would temporarily suspend the Federal excise tax on diesel fuel for 1 year, or until the price of crude oil is reduced to the December 31, 1999, level. It would replace lost revenues with moneys from the budget surplus in the general fund while protecting the highway trust fund. The

bill has bipartisan support, with 12 cosponsors. Even at that, we know it is only a short-term solution.

The real problem is our dependency on foreign oil. All the negotiations this administration is doing to get OPEC to open its spigots is not more than a Band-Aid approach to the problem that will continually revisit us as long as we are dependent on foreign oil. The administration has known this and the danger to our national security since 1994. Senator MURKOWSKI spoke to that yesterday.

It is unfortunate we, as a global superpower, are reduced to begging. More forceful actions are needed and must be taken to expose the severity of the problem and to address it now and in months to come. We cannot simply stand by and do nothing.

We can do better. We should be opening new oil fields. We should be doing better incentive work to keep the stripper wells from closing, and certainly we should renew our efforts in oil shale and other renewable fuels that can be turned into gasoline oil. Most of all, we have to untether ourselves from Mideast oil.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, a number of my Republican colleagues have spoken on the floor about the absence of an energy policy on the part of the Clinton-Gore administration. I believe that description is only half right. It is true the Clinton-Gore administration has no express energy policy that would lead or even contribute to U.S. energy independence. But the Clinton-Gore administration, on the other hand, does have a very significant implicit energy policy. Under that policy, it discourages or prohibits exploration for either oil or natural gas over extensive and increasingly large areas of our country.

Under that implicit energy policy, it proposes to reduce the amount of hydroelectric power we have and, in fact, to treat hydroelectric power as though it were not renewable.

Under that implicit energy policy, it has given us an increasing dependence each year on foreign sources for petroleum products, now at 55 or 56 percent, and inevitably directed at 65 percent or two-thirds of that oil. Implicitly, it has given us an energy policy that resulted last month in the largest single trade deficit in the history of the United States, due, in major part, to imports of petroleum products and a trade deficit that will inevitably continue to increase.

So suddenly we do have a short-term explicit energy policy. It is to send the Secretary of Energy of the United States of America, hat in hand, to countries in Latin America, in Southwest Asia, and now most recently into Nigeria, to plead with these countries

to lower the cost of the oil they send to us. This is a total abdication of the appropriate policy of an administration interested in the trade balance of the United States and in energy independence for the United States.

Mr. President, what is the answer to this question? Obviously, in the short term our hands are relatively tied. We do, however, have one option in front of us which we can engage immediately that will provide at least modest relief to the American people during the course of this energy crisis, and that is the elimination—whether permanent or temporary—of the 4.3-cent motor vehicle fuel tax that was imposed by the President and the Congress in 1993. I am convinced we should follow that course of action. It is urgent for everyone. It is overwhelmingly urgent for the airlines of the United States that operate in a highly competitive atmosphere. They are being brutally punished, along with their passengers, with the increased airfare caused by that tax.

This is an option the Congress could and should take up and pass with extreme promptness. However, in the long run, the more important solution is a longer-term solution. That solution lies on two sides: the supply of energy for the people of the United States to use and the way in which we use that energy with appropriate conservation measures.

From the point of view of supply, when we deal with petroleum alone, we should change policies which have discouraged production in the United States—policies of regulation and taxation and hostility that have closed down existing sources of supply in various parts of the United States.

We should very seriously consider and move toward the creation of new sources of supply rather than cutting them off and prohibiting them, whether they are in the North Slope of Alaska or in various parts of the lower 48 States of the United States. We need to do this in order to have any leverage with the rest of the world with respect to the prices it charges us for petroleum supplies. This policy should apply not only to petroleum but to natural gas as well.

Second, I am convinced we should continue to encourage and should encourage even more the production of at least supplements to our petroleum supply that are totally within the control of the United States and that are renewable in nature. Ethanol perhaps ranks as No. 1 on this particular list. It can be produced by American grain. It adds to our supply, and it is, of course, completely within our own control, and it enriches the people who provide these agricultural commodities.

Next, from the point of view of conservation, I point out the utter and insane folly of proposing to remove dams from the Snake River that produce re-

newable and environmentally benign electric power. If those dams are removed, as many in the administration wish to do, we will end up putting 700,000 trucks on the roads of the northwestern part of the United States each and every year more than are on those roads at the present time—major trucks that carry grain and other products for export. The idea that we should be using all of that additional amount of diesel and gasoline fuel is simply, in my view, beyond reasonable consideration.

Finally, I believe we have to aim at the way in which we as Americans use power, and particularly motor vehicle fuels. Last July, for the first time in several years, this body was asked once again by me and by other Senators to go back to the successes of the 1970s and to reestablish a Government program to improve the energy efficiency of our automobiles and small trucks, the so-called CAFE standards. In the 1970s, this was one of the most successful programs—the single most successful governmental program—in history. We came close to doubling the average mileage of our passenger automobiles during that period of time. This crisis would not be a crisis; it would be an unmitigated disaster had those who perceived it not established and implemented those policies of the 1970s. But in the early 1980s, we abandoned that policy, and we have abandoned it ever since.

We have even gone so far in this body and in the other body to prohibit any study of increasing CAFE standards, as far as small trucks are concerned, and even automobiles at any time in the immediate future. When we voted on that proposition last July, 40 Members of this body—not a majority but a very substantial minority—voted in favor of it before there was a crisis. Now the crisis is upon us. Now we have people wondering why it is our small trucks and SUVs are so energy inefficient. People are being punished by the lack of foresight of this administration and having the cost of operating those vehicles increase exponentially, and it is often not affordable.

I am convinced that in addition to providing a greater degree of supply from sources within the United States we must, once again, focus on making our use of that energy and particularly making petroleum energy more efficient. The best way we can do that is by going back to the CAFE standard regime we had a generation ago in the United States and doing what is technologically quite feasible to do by increasing anywhere from 20 to 50 percent the efficiency of the engines that use petroleum products. That would be a true energy policy—an energy policy both for the short term and the long term, a policy which is totally and completely lacking in the Clinton-Gore administration at the present time.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to join many of my colleagues in expressing my deepest concern about the problem concerning energy and the cost of energy to many working Americans, and certainly to my constituents in the State of Maine.

We have been plagued by a significant surge in increases at the pump—certainly during the wintertime in the State of Maine concerning oil prices, home heating oil prices that more than doubled within a 1-month period, not to mention the gasoline prices we are seeing and the tremendous spike in those prices, as well. And, even according to the Department of Energy's own information, we will not expect an abatement of those prices by the end of the year. In fact, we can expect to have continuously high prices in terms of gasoline.

We know that the OPEC countries are going to be meeting on Monday, 4 days from now. We hope the administration and the Congress sends an unequivocal message that they rethink their unconscionable policy of keeping a very low level of production when it comes to petroleum products.

We know that a year ago in October they made a decision to limit production when it came to oil. The administration was well aware of the fact that the OPEC cartel had made a deliberate and concerted decision to limit the production of oil. Even last fall, the Department of Energy's own report indicated that we could expect a 40-percent rise in home heating oil prices, and if it was a severe winter, a 30-percent rise in home heating oil prices. That was more than a 70-percent increase projected by the Department of Energy with respect to home heating oil prices. That was anticipated by our own Department of Energy last October.

In fact, my constituents in the State of Maine faced a 100-percent increase in home heating oil prices—a 100-percent increase. Yet we had silence from the administration—silence when the OPEC cartel made this decision to limit the production of oil without any apparent reason, and without any rationale.

Then the Department of Energy anticipated we could have up toward a 70-percent increase in home heating oil prices. In fact, we face a 100-percent increase. Yet there was a deafening silence from the administration when it

came to the types of policies that could mitigate the burden the surging prices imposed on working Americans.

Here we are today anticipating what might or might not happen on Monday, the kinds of decisions made by the OPEC cartel. I hope the administration is working very hard to send a strong message that the OPEC cartel should reconsider its policy. Its policy is all the more shocking when we consider the men and women all across this country who defended the freedom of democracy for countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, that the United States lost 147 American lives, 458 were wounded, and 23 were taken prisoner in the struggle during the Persian Gulf war.

I think it is entirely appropriate for Congress and the administration to press OPEC in terms of the kind of decision they should be making on Monday. The administration also should consider predicating foreign assistance to some of these foreign countries that are part of the decisionmaking of the OPEC cartel, such as Mexico, whom we bailed out 5 years ago when it came to the peso crisis to the tune of \$13.5 billion. We were prepared to bail them out up to the tune of \$20 billion to ease the economic hardship imposed on their people. It is no different now.

Or Indonesia and Nigeria, for whom the President is proposing \$256 million in economic assistance because these are countries in transition. Again, our assistance should be predicated on their cooperation.

Those are the kinds of issues we must confront. In the short term, we have to deal with the reality of what is happening at the gas pump. I hope Congress will give consideration to recommendations that will be made by many who have been working on this issue to suspend the 4.3-cent gas tax which many Members opposed back in 1993 because we didn't think this was a hardship we should impose on the American people.

Beyond that, if the price of gasoline is going to surge upwards of \$2—which it is already doing in California—we should clearly suspend all of the taxes on diesel and gasoline because it is that important to our economy and to Americans in all parts of the country, not just in one region; it will be in all regions.

When the Department of Energy says it would undoubtedly be too late to deflect domestic gasoline prices on their way to record nominal levels and may be too little to reduce prices much by the end of the year 2000, clearly we have something to be concerned about.

No one really knows even if OPEC will make a positive decision on Monday. I am concerned about the decision they will make on Monday or if they decide to have other meetings.

What does that all mean if this does not translate into lower prices at the

gas pump this summer? We clearly will have problems. I know my State will have problems. It is a tourist State. We rely on tourism. It is the second biggest industry in the State of Maine.

I think we have to be prepared. I hope we do fashion a policy that is contingent upon what the price might be, irrespective of the decision made by OPEC. That is a decision the administration is not prepared to make, and they are not even prepared to take a step forward in any direction. The President announced last week: We will do a reserve in the Northeast but we need to do an environmental impact study; it needs legislation from Congress.

Senator DODD introduced legislation in which many joined because we think it is a prudent policy to set up a reserve in the Northeast to mitigate the impact of high price increases or an interruption in oil supply. What is so difficult about that? The President can't even take that step. He says there are a lot of contingencies involved. In effect, we don't have anything from this administration to address this problem. We don't have an energy policy.

Congress is going to have to take the concerted steps necessary to address these problems in the short term to be sure these are short-term solutions. We also have to look at the long term. I did support the CAFE standard issue that Senator GORTON addressed today as well. Obviously, the costs have been significant to this country in terms of transportation. We need to get better fuel efficiency with respect to automobiles and minivans.

We also should look at providing some incentives for the marginal producers in this country, the small producers, about which Senator HUTCHISON has also talked, as well. Congress will have to take the lead because it is clear that this administration is not intending to in any respect. Beyond anticipating we will have this problem this year, the administration has been virtually silent. I hope they make the message very clear to the OPEC countries about how important their decision will be on Monday.

Beyond that, we also have to be prepared for any contingencies in the future that these prices might not decline in the short term or for the remainder of this year. Frankly, it is not just my word, it is the word of the Department of Energy.

Again, I hope we will be taking actions in the next few days irrespective of what the decision might be from the OPEC nations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today, as has the Senator from Maine, to speak about the energy crisis our country finds itself in. Let me use those words again: energy crisis.

A week and a half ago, Senator SNOWE was before my subcommittee testifying on some key legislation she has introduced. The Senator from Maine recognizes the phenomenal impact high energy costs have on her State. Whether it is home heating or the transportation systems that drive her industries, she has recognized it clearly and early on announced to this administration there was a problem coming and encouraged them to change their policy. Yet they have done nothing.

As I listened to the Senator from Maine this morning, she spoke very clearly about what this country needs to do. I strongly support the words she has stated for the RECORD.

When the Clinton-Gore administration came to town in 1993, it announced its intent to drastically alter the way the Nation used energy, especially fossil fuels. Remember, briefly, the President and the Vice President determined that through the use of a broad-based Btu tax, they would drive us away from our most abundant and economical fuels to a renewable solar wind or biomass system. The objective has remained a hallmark of this administration's energy policy. That is all they have wanted to talk about until now.

Their policy now is to send the Secretary of Energy abroad with a tin cup, begging at the wells of foreign energy producers, asking them to please turn on their tap. We will know next Monday whether the begging of Bill Richardson and the energy policy of this administration has worked.

President Clinton promised early when he came to town that the tax he proposed, \$72 billion over 5 years, was going to be fair, it was going to be healthful, it was going to force down dependency on foreign oil, and do the right things for consumers. In fact, it would have unfairly punished energy-intensive States such as mine, Western States where transportation needs and movements spread across broad expanses in agricultural States such as mine. The American Petroleum Insurance Institute and the National Association of Manufacturers predicted the tax would hurt exports, reduce GDP in this country by \$38 billion, and destroy some 700,000 jobs. Yet the administration wouldn't listen. They drove on, pushing the tax issue.

Clinton and Gore claimed the tax was needed to balance the budget and fund large new spending programs to offset the negative impact of the tax. They also claimed the use of crude oil imports would fall dramatically, by 400,000 barrels a day.

At that time, DOE's own projections predicted the tax would shave oil import growth by less than one-tenth after 10 years. DOE predicted by the year 2000, Americans would depend on foreign oil for three-fifths of their total crude oil requirements.

The American Petroleum Institute testified before the Energy Committee on which I sit. It said:

... even if imports were to fall by the full 400,000 barrels a day claimed by the administration, the cost of \$34 billion in lost GDP is excessive relative to other alternatives for improving energy security. Using the administration's optimistic predictions, the cost of the Btu tax works out to be about \$230 a barrel.

That is right, \$230 a barrel. In the end, Congress refused. Thank goodness we listened to the experts. We didn't listen to the politics of the Clinton-Gore administration, and we said no. Hopefully, in the next few days we will also reverse something that was largely a Clinton-Gore initiative and that was the 4.3-cent-per-gallon gas tax that our consumers are now paying.

The Clinton-Gore administration's obsession with the use of fossil fuel reduction has actually put us in the position we find ourselves today. What does our President say? On March 7 of this year, he said:

Americans should not want them [oil prices] to drop to \$10 or \$12 again because that ... takes our mind off the business of ... alternative fuels, energy conservation, reducing the impact of all of this on global warming.

Mr. President, we should not take our minds off energy conservation. That is good policy. We should not take our minds off alternative fuels, that is also good policy. But saying you are going to tax hydrocarbons out of existence and now finding this Nation pushing itself into an inflationary mode, finding our costs going up dramatically because of your policies, it was wrongheaded then and it is wrongheaded now. And we know it.

What has happened since 1993? Domestic oil production is down 17 percent. Domestic crude oil consumption is up 14 percent. Dependence on foreign oil sources of crude oil has risen to 56 percent of our total crude requirements.

In 1973, during the Arab oil embargo, our dependence on foreign crude was 36 percent of our crude oil requirement.

Iraq is our fastest growing source for U.S. crude imports, about 700,000 barrels a day. I have one thing to say to the President: Shame on you. Shame on you for the absence of policy and the clear knowledge that you had, that all of us had, that this kind of dependency would ultimately result if we did not push and we did not drive toward a more effective domestic policy to increase production and find all the other effective conservation uses we could find.

The Clinton-Gore administration, while making much of the increase in efficiency, greater use of renewables from biomass, and other things, ignores the very fundamental fact that a large part of our energy use cannot be addressed by these measures. Sure, it is an important part of the blend but a

very small percentage of what is absolutely and necessarily needed.

Of course, those of us who come from agriculture recognize the importance of crude oil feed stocks to the chemical industry and the products they produce, which results in the high quality of agriculture production in our country. The administration fails to encourage domestic oil production and the production of coal and natural gas that now leads us to this point.

The administration has refused to acknowledge the vast reserves of oil and gas offshore, in Alaska and the Rocky Mountain overthrust area. Of course, we, the consumers, are now paying the price.

The Clinton-Gore administration recently announced a ban on future exploration on most of the Federal Outer Continental Shelf until the year 2012. Can you imagine that? Here we are, increasingly dependent on foreign sources, and the President turns his back on some of the largest reserves left in this country to be explored by some of the finest technology in environmentally sensitive ways that we now know, to bring oil into production in the Outer Continental Shelf.

In 1996, the administration resorted to the use of the Antiquities Act to lock up 23 billion tons of mineable low-sulfur, high-quality coal in Utah. The story goes on and on.

I would argue the Clinton-Gore administration has acted in other ways designed to force us away from the use of all of these resources that are so abundant and so available to us and wise for us to use. At the present rate, we are now demonstrating our unwillingness to produce at the local, national level. We will be 56-percent dependent, moving into 60-percent dependent in very short order.

The U.S. Forest Service has issued road construction policies that are designed to restrict the energy industry's ability to explore for oil and gas on Forest Service lands.

The Clinton-Gore administration has vetoed legislation that would have opened the coastal plain of the remote Alaska National Wildlife Reserve denying the Nation access to an estimated 16 billion barrels of domestic crude oil.

The administration has ignored a report prepared by the National Petroleum Council, requested by the Energy Secretary, explaining how the Nation can increase production and use of domestic natural gas resources from about 22 trillion cubic feet per year to more than 30 trillion cubic feet per year over the next 10 to 12 years.

The Clinton-Gore administration has shown little interest in solving our domestic energy problems until now as foreign oil producers have forced crude oil prices to over \$30 per barrel and gasoline prices to almost \$2 per gallon—double prices of only little more than a year ago.

I would argue that the Clinton-Gore administration has acted in other ways designed to force us away from the use of readily available, relatively inexpensive fossil fuels. It has chosen especially to vilify and deny the use of our most abundant national energy resource—coal. My distinguished friend from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT BYRD spoke eloquently yesterday on this subject and I want to add a few thoughts to his.

The U.S. has the world's largest demonstrated coal reserve base and accounts for more than 90 percent of our total fossil energy reserves.

At present rates of recovery and use, U.S. reserves will last more than 270 years.

Coal is used to generate over 56 percent of our electricity supply—and about 88 percent of the Midwest's electricity needs.

Coal use for electric power has risen more than 250 percent since 1970 while sulfur dioxide emissions have decreased to 21 percent below 1970 levels and introduction of new cleaner coal combustion technologies will continue to push emissions of all types down.

Electricity from hydro represents about 10 to 12 percent of our electricity needs.

Nuclear powerplants meet about 20 percent of our total electricity demand.

Yet the Clinton-Gore administration takes a dim view of these sources and has taken steps to reduce their use.

In November 1999 the Environmental Protection Agency sued several coal burning utilities claiming they made major modifications to their facilities without applying for New Source Review permits. Utilities maintain that the modifications fall within the "routine maintenance" exception to the new source rule, and that EPA had routinely approved such actions in the past.

EPA is discussing the notion that new source review should include "voluntary" regulation of CO₂—which is not a poisonous gas and which is not regulated by any part of the Clean Air Act.

EPA recently changed the toxics release inventory to require electric utilities to report chemical release data. The level at which reporting is required for Mercury was lowered by an order of magnitude. In making these changes EPA presented no studies or supporting rationale for why nearby communities should suddenly be concerned about such releases. Nevertheless, the reports will be widely published thereby placing utilities at the top of the list of "dirty" facilities.

In 1993, EPA concluded that coal combustion wastes (fly ash, bottom ash, slag waste, and other combustion products) from electric utility generation do not warrant hazardous waste regulation. EPA appears now to be pre-

pared to reverse an EPA staff decision that coal combustion wastes do not warrant regulation as "hazardous."

In 1998, EPA issued revised Nitrogen Oxides New Source Performance Standards for all new and existing utility and industrial boilers. It based its standard on a single, very expensive control system regardless of boiler and fuel type.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has talked openly about "tearing down dams" in the West to restore habitat for fish, ignoring the power and transportation benefits they provide. And, the administration is imposing new, often impossible criteria that must be met before federal licenses can be re-issued. Many existing hydro projects will seek relicensing over the next several decades.

Finally, the Clinton-Gore administration continues to threaten veto of legislation designed to create a permanent nuclear waste storage facility and which fulfills a longstanding promise by the federal government to create such a facility. Without a federal storage facility, U.S. nuclear generating stations, which are running out of on-site storage capacity may be forced to shut down their operations.

There are too many more examples of the Clinton-Gore administration's failure to produce a coherent, balanced national energy plan. It almost seems they are trying to create crisis after crisis in the hope that a magical solution will rise from the chaos—fat chance. Solving these problems requires tough choices and I suggest that we begin now by pursuing a number of short to long term objectives.

We should work with our Western Hemisphere neighbors to help them increase their crude oil production.

We should provide relief to consumers by cutting taxes on fuels derived from crude oil, such as the 4.3-cents a gallon tax and the 24-cent a gallon tax on highway diesel fuel and taxes on fuels for air, rail and barge transportation.

We need to step away from punitive, command and control environmental regulations and move toward performance based regulatory concepts that offer the regulated community opportunities to find flexible approaches to reducing emissions of legally regulated contaminants.

Finally, we need to face up to the fact that we are part of the problem. Our unwillingness to develop our own abundant oil, gas and coal resources dooms us to greater dependence on foreign sources, especially for crude oil. We must make the conscious choice to carefully find and develop our resources while protecting our environment.

CROP INSURANCE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 2251, the Risk Manage-

ment for the 21st Century Act regarding crop insurance reform, I am an original co-sponsor of this important legislation and I thank my colleagues Senators BOB KERREY and PAT ROBERTS for their leadership on this issue.

Crop insurance reform has been a major, bipartisan legislative effort for farm state Senators. Reforming crop insurance is vital to America's agricultural producers and to the rural economies in all of our ag-producing states. We need to pass this legislation today.

The need for crop insurance reform has been a common denominator in my conversations with all of Nebraska's agricultural producers and agribusinesses, as I am sure it has for my colleagues as they have spoken with ag-producers across the country.

Every commodity organization and farm group that I've spoken with has urged Congress to reform and improve America's crop insurance programs.

Why is crop insurance important? By increasing and expanding private crop insurance coverage, ag producers can make long-term market decisions without being devastated by short-term economic downturns.

If we can assist in making crop insurance—an important risk management tool—more affordable and expansive, we will help producers weather the bad times.

S. 2251 makes a number of important changes to the crop insurance system that will benefit America's ag producers.

This bill establishes a new premium assistance formula to encourage producers to increase their crop insurance coverage by making higher levels of coverage more affordable, and increases the level of coverage farmers can purchase.

It will ease actual "production history" rules so that farmer's insurance coverage is less likely to be artificially depressed by successive years of bad weather.

This legislation will reduce the potential for insurance fraud and abuse with strong program compliance provisions.

It includes new pilot projects for livestock insurance, specialty crops, and coverage reinsured through futures markets.

By passing the Risk Management for the 21st Century Act we can help eliminate some of the uncertainty and instability in farm operations, thus allowing farmers to plan for the long-term.

Additionally, this legislation should help Congress and the American taxpayers reduce the need for disaster-assistance packages for our ag producers, and the costs associated with him.

If we can help provide farmers with the management tools they need to plan for their future, there will be less of a need to rely on future emergency supplemental appropriations bills when bad times strike.